



Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Corporate Plan

1. Foreword

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade was officially established on 1 July, 2003 under the Ministerial and Departmental Arrangements Act 2003. This is therefore, the first Corporate Plan of the Ministry.

The Plan sets out the framework for the Ministry's work in the period 2004 - 2007. It explains the scope of the Ministry's objectives and outputs, its operational structure, and the standards of performance required of its staff. The Plan therefore provides a guide to actions the Ministry takes in the management of Samoa's external relations, and in support of the development and strategic results outlined in the Government's Statement of Development Strategy.

Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi

PRIME MINISTER

and MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE

2. Overview

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade is tasked with advising Government on Samoa's foreign and trade relations.

The promotion and enhancement of Samoa's interests internationally is achieved by strengthening bilateral and multilateral relations in key regional and international fora. In doing this, Samoa has become a responsible, reform-minded democracy.

This is an image that has been further enhanced by Government's ability to contribute to various regional and international emergency/ relief operations and peace keeping efforts, as well as being in the forefront in instituting economic and administrative reforms. In addition, Samoa continues to attract positive attention from abroad, including financial and trade support to aid Governments' efforts to further develop and strengthen its economy, and improve overall the welfare and prosperity of all Samoans.

The outcome of the work of the Ministry, in particular the management, administration and conduct of Samoa's foreign affairs and trade relations with the international community, contributes considerably to the overall effort of Samoa being recognised as a democratic, socially and economically stable country. The Ministry must ensure that within the constraints of available resources, it continues to improve and deliver quality advice to Government and represent effectively the interests of Samoa internationally.

Given current resource constraints and high costs, it is unlikely that Samoa would be opening new missions abroad in the near future. This will oblige greater efficiency and effectiveness of current staff and existing diplomatic missions overseas, and further encourage the Ministry to look for alternative ways to promote greater awareness and appreciation of Samoa worldwide.

Domestically, the Ministry continues to consult closely with government agencies, the private sector, non-government organisations and the public on issues which bear on the mandate of the Ministry and its stated outputs.

Crucial to the operations of the Ministry is the development of its diplomatic career structure. With continuous training and enhancement of

its human resources, the Ministry will be able to conduct its mandate and meet its responsibilities efficiently and effectively.

3. *Mandate*

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (hereafter called “*the Ministry*”) was officially established on 1 July, 2003 under the Ministerial and Departmental Arrangements Act 2003 (hereafter called “*the Act*”).

The Act incorporates the former Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Trade Division of the former Department of Trade, Commerce and Industry.

The Ministry is entrusted with the administration and conduct of Samoa’s relations, foreign affairs and trade relations with other nations through its headquarters in Apia, and its Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates abroad. The Ministry is committed to managing Samoa’s international relations to promote Samoa’s national interest and achieve most benefits for Samoa in relation to the Government’s economic, trade and security objectives.

Samoa currently has official diplomatic relations with 56 States, and is a full member to twenty major international/ regional organisations. Samoa is a full contracting Party to many international treaties, ranging from international, security and disarmament to human rights; the environment and climate change to maritime and fisheries issues; and economic/ financial cooperation and trade arrangements.

The Ministry records, facilitates and advises on Samoa’s accession and ratification of treaties, conventions and agreements. It also carries out depository functions for various regional and international agreements, as required under international law.

The Ministry administers the Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities Act 1978.

4. *Vision*

For Samoa to be recognised as a regional leader and an active participant in global decision making and to improve trade prospects and opportunities for Samoa.

5. *Mission*

To initiate and continue to provide high quality and professional policy advice to Government on the management of Samoa's foreign and trade relations.

6. *Operating Environment*

Samoa is a small island developing State, situated in the central Pacific and separated from its neighbouring island countries by vast expanses of water. Samoa continues to face rather unique challenges determined largely by her smallness and isolation, thereby restricting her ability to compete internationally. Samoa is also classified as a Least Developed Country, due mainly to her vulnerability to natural disasters and to external economic and trade developments for which she has no control. These factors and characteristics therefore determine largely Samoa's options and interaction with the region and international community, and also provide both challenges and opportunities for development.

The conduct of political relations in the twentieth century has fostered awareness of a myriad of other economic, environmental, human rights, religious and ethnic issues that now form the core challenges facing the international community. September 11, 2001 brought to home compelling evidence that we have entered an era of new challenges, where terrorism has become a direct and most serious threat to democracy, to the free exercise of human rights and to economic and social development.

To have an impact therefore in global decision making, Samoa has to work closely and collaboratively with other small island and like-minded States in strong regional and global groupings. With increasing interactions and inter-connectedness with the international community, Samoa has, to the extent possible, become an active and responsible participant in global decision making.

Samoa is a founding member of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF); the Pacific Community (SPC); the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA); the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP); the South Pacific Applied Geosciences Commission (SOPAC), and the University of the South Pacific (USP). Samoa is also a founding member of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP).

Samoa is also Party to the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) and the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER). At present, Samoa is negotiating new Economic Partnership Arrangements with the European Union under the Cotonou Agreement. Under the guidance and leadership of the Trade Division of the Ministry, Samoa's membership to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) is currently being negotiated.

In the international arena, Samoa is amongst the first Pacific island country to join the United Nations Organisation and most of its key specialised agencies, and is an active member of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and the Group of 77. Samoa is also a member of the Commonwealth.

The Ministry continues to review developments associated with its membership to various regional and international organisations, and thus determine how they might affect Samoa's interest. Accordingly, the Ministry will provide policy advice to Government for decision making purposes.

On the domestic front, the Ministry continues to maintain and strengthen close working relations with government departments, the private sector, non-governmental organisations and the general public. The valuable support provided by focal local partners is crucial to the effective performance of the Ministry's functions.

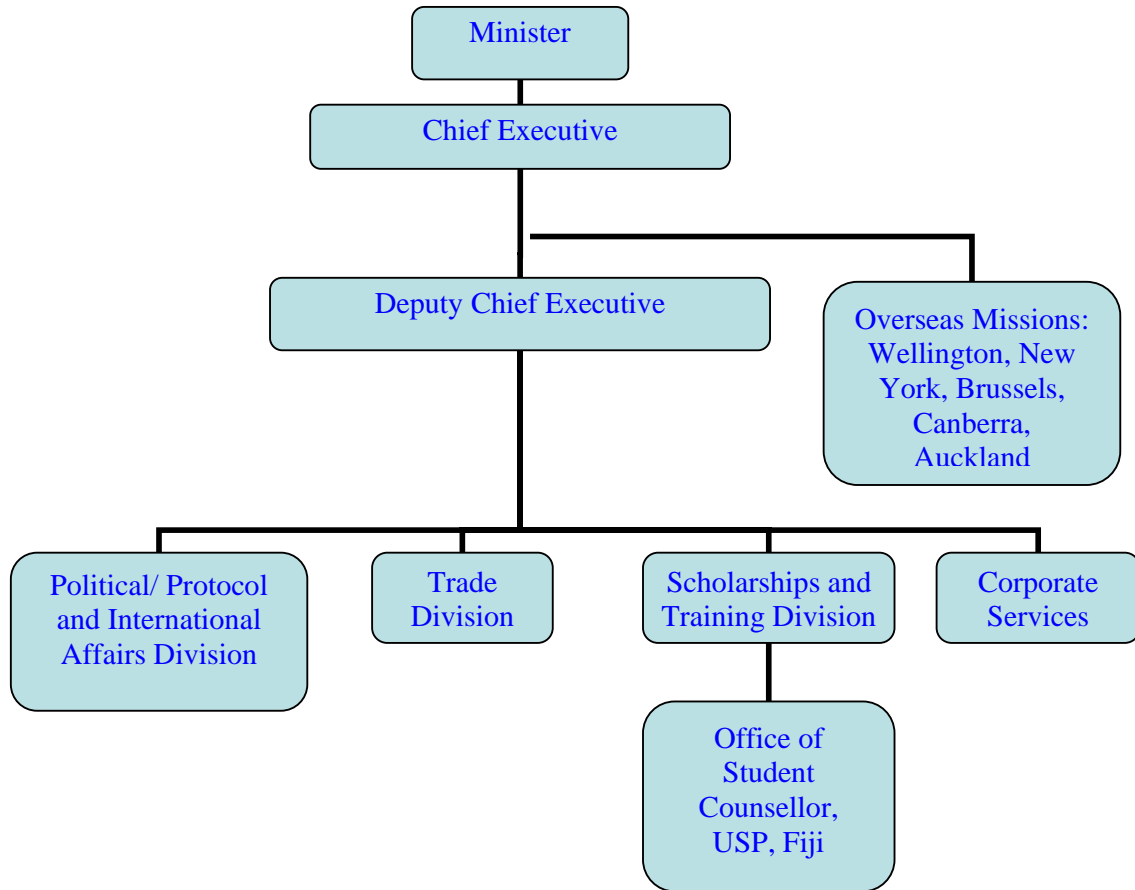
7. Organisational Structure

The Ministry has an established career structure, organised into three core Divisions, comprising the Political/ Protocol and International Affairs Division, Trade Division, and the Scholarships and Training Division. The Ministry also has a Corporate Services Division, which provides support to the core divisions and overseas missions of the Ministry.

The Ministry operates missions in Wellington, New Zealand; Brussels, Belgium, with accreditation to United Kingdom and selected European countries; New York, USA, with accreditation to the United

States and Canada; Canberra, Australia; and a Consulate-General in Auckland, New Zealand. The Ministry also administers the Office of the Student Counsellor in the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji. There are also a number of Honorary Consuls representing Samoa in various strategic locations around the world.

The current organisational structure is summarised in the following chart:



8. *Values and Principles*

The Ministry, in pursuit of its mission and objectives for Samoa to be recognised as a regional leader and an active participant in global decision making, as well as to improve trade prospects and opportunities

for Samoa and to be able to attract national support and cooperation, the conduct of its staff and foreign representatives must be of the highest standard.

The Ministry is therefore fully committed to having its staff perform with professionalism, discretion, honesty and integrity. Officers must protect matters of professional confidentiality and act in an accountable, transparent and responsible manner.

Staff members are encouraged not to place themselves in situations that might involve a conflict or the perception of a conflict of interest, both in the administration of the Ministry's affairs and when dealing with its customers and stakeholders.

The Ministry is an equal opportunity employer and encourages both women and men to apply when vacancies occur.

9. Objectives

To realise our vision and achieve our mission, we pursue the following objectives:

- to provide high standard policy advice on foreign affairs and trade development to the Minister and government;

- to manage Samoa's foreign relations in the most effective and efficient manner, including the effective management of representation of other States and inter-governmental organisations in Samoa;
- to provide essential and appropriate protocol services and government hospitality to visiting foreign envoys and dignitaries;
- to represent Samoa's interests effectively in other countries and at the international fora, including the provision of consular service to Samoans abroad;
- to manage Samoa's training and scholarship opportunities overseas and in local tertiary institutions in a transparent and accountable manner;
- to effectively manage, coordinate and facilitate trade policy issues and trade promotion strategies, and ensure Samoa's active participation in regional and international trading arrangements;
- to provide an effective and efficient support structure to service the core work of the Ministry;

10. Operations of the Ministry

Descriptions of the main functions and activities of the Ministry are set out in the following pages:

Provision of Policy Advice on foreign and trade relations with Other Countries (bilateral relations)

Description:

This is concerned with policy advice and representation activities directed towards the management of Samoa's foreign and trade relations with other countries.

Policy advice and representation activities involve the maintenance of strong relationships with key governments of importance to Samoa, thus facilitating advocacy and representation of Government's positions and views. The latter is performed in the Ministry's capacity as the internationally accepted channel of communication with other governments, including the negotiation of agreements. Comprehensive advice and recommendations on external issues and events are also made to the Minister based on thorough research and analysis. Furthermore, advice is provided to the Minister on proposals from other government departments that may affect the management of Samoa's foreign and trade relations with individual countries.

Performance Indicators:

The successful formulation and provision of policy advice on foreign and trade relations with other countries should positively influence Government's decision and policy-making processes, and yield positive feedback from the Minister, Cabinet and other government agencies.

Provision of Policy Advice and Representation: International Organisations.

Description:

This is concerned with policy advice and representation activities related to the management of Samoa's membership of, and foreign affairs and trade interests in, international and regional organisations. This include key areas of multilateral co-operation to which Government has decided to give special attention to, such as international trade in goods and services; international security and disarmament; social, humanitarian and cultural matters; and international environment issues, to name a few. These international and regional organisations include:

- i. the United Nations and its specialised agencies, programmes and funds;
- ii. the Commonwealth Secretariat and its associated institutions;
- iii. various international environmental organisations;
- iv. various international disarmament organisations; and
- v. Pacific Regional Organisations.

Samoa's membership to the World Trade Organisation is presently being negotiated by the Ministry on behalf of the Government.

To ensure that Government's positions and views are advocated during discussions and/or negotiations of international agreements, it is imperative that an active level of representation or presence is maintained in international and regional organisations that Samoa is a member of. Comprehensive advice and recommendations are made to the Minister based on thorough research and examination of issues and developments in key regional and international organisations of priority and relevance to Samoa, and also on matters of mutual interests with partner countries.

Performance Indicators:

The successful formulation and provision of policy advice and representation activities relating to Samoa's membership to, and foreign affairs and trade interests in, international and regional organisations should positively influence Government's decision and policy-making processes pertaining to external issues. A further reflection of the success of Samoa's representation in key regional and international organisations will also be made evident in the effectiveness of measures taken or responses made locally, as a result of advice or recommendations provided by the Ministry.

Representation of Samoa's Interests in other Countries and Consular Services

Description:

This refers to the representation of Samoa's interests, and provision of consular services abroad through the Ministries diplomatic Missions based in New Zealand, the United States, Australia and Belgium.

Acting on behalf of the Government, the diplomatic Missions ensure that Government's interests are represented and promoted in host countries, as well as countries accredited to Samoa, particularly in relation to the promotion of trade and tourism activities, and dissemination of information pertaining to these activities. It also includes, where possible, the organisation of visits and meetings, and liaising and consulting with

officials of host countries and other resident representatives that are accredited to, and have diplomatic relations with Samoa.

The provision of consular services to Samoans abroad includes advice and assistance in cases of distress; immigration matters and emergencies; repatriation; aid in cases of deaths; as well as the provision of assistance to Samoan scholarship students studying abroad. It includes, where possible, the provision of logistical support for visits and travel by the Head of State, Members of the Council of Deputies, the Prime Minister, Cabinet members and other VIP delegates.

Performance Indicators:

The successful operation of its diplomatic Missions abroad will ensure the maintenance of good and close bilateral relations with key partner nations, which in turn will encourage interests and enquiries pertaining to trade and investment issues, as well as technical/ economic cooperation in, and immigration and tourism enquiries on Samoa. In addition, it will also promote positive and supportive responses, including increase aid flow into Samoa not only from host countries, but also countries accredited to, and with diplomatic relations with Samoa.

***Administration of Long and Short Term Study Opportunities
Abroad and in Local Tertiary Institutions***

Description:

This focuses on the development of policies for the administration of various scholarship schemes and practical training opportunities, both locally and abroad.

The development of policies for the administration of long and short term study and training opportunities involves the provision of timely and relevant guidelines and advice to Government pertaining to scholarship and training schemes available to it. It also involves the effective coordination of such opportunities with relevant local and foreign government agencies, as well as other regional and international institutions, to ensure the successful outcome and continued availability of such opportunities to the people of Samoa.

Performance Indicators:

The successful development and effective implementation of procedures for the administration of long and short term study and training opportunities will ensure the timely action of nominations and selection processes for such opportunities. It will also steadily encourage further actions for the streamlining and refinement of necessary procedures for study and training opportunities, which in turn will assist to influence the decision and policy-making processes of the Samoa Scholarships and Training Committee (STSC).

Trade Policy and Promotion Strategies

Description:

This is concerned with the formulation, recommendation and development of appropriate policies and strategies, in consultation with stakeholders, on trade policy and promotion strategies. It also ensures that Samoa's participation and obligations under international trading arrangements are effectively implemented and that benefits from membership to such agreements are realised.

This involves the implementation of the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) and the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER), and the facilitation and coordination of negotiations on Samoa's accession to the World Trade Organisation. It also involves the facilitation and coordination of Samoa's interests in the new Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the Pacific ACP Countries and the European Union, and other trading arrangements.

Pursuing excellent market access opportunities and provision of advice to Samoan exporters will remain an important task for the Ministry, supported by an efficient system for providing and disseminating trade-related information. Comprehensive trade policy advice and recommendations made to the Minister are therefore based on thorough research and analysis of new issues and developments on the multilateral trade agenda.

Performance Indicators:

The successful formulation and provision of policy advice and representation activities relating to trade policy and promotion strategies will promote marketing opportunities and practical assistance to the private sector. Recommendations relating to Samoa's negotiating position on the

EPA, as well as on the GSP scheme and other preferential market access will be accepted; and further understanding of Samoa's accession to the WTO will be realised. Stakeholders' awareness on the implementation of PICTA and PACER, as well as Samoa's obligations under these agreements will increase, as will the opportunities for the identification of new markets, improved productions and marketing strategies.

Administration of Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities

Description:

This covers the administration of the Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities Act 1978, and the effective interpretation of diplomatic and consular privileges under the Vienna Convention. It includes making arrangements for the accreditation of heads of diplomatic missions to Samoa, including Heads of accredited international and regional organisations; the processing of immigration entry requirements; importation and duty free entitlements; and issuance of appropriate documentation. It also includes liaisons with, and the provision of host government services to diplomatic and consular corps, as well as accredited international and regional organisations in Samoa, and also visiting foreign VIPs and representatives.

Advice is also provided to the Minister as to the appointment of Samoa's representatives abroad, as well as to the application of diplomatic and consular privileges and immunities in Samoa as required.

From time to time, the Ministry reviews in a timely manner requests for diplomatic clearances visiting naval vessels and military aircrafts to Samoa. The Ministry also maintains effective networking between local government departments to ensure protocol requirements and exemptions due to diplomatic privileges are implemented accordingly.

Performance Indicators:

The successful administration of the Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities Act 1978, and the effective interpretation of diplomatic and consular privileges under the Vienna Convention will ensure the existence of and adherence to high protocol standards. It generates positive responses from visiting foreign dignitaries and representatives, as well as the resident diplomatic corps and representatives of regional and international organisations, and which in turn reflects positively on Government and its officials.

Provision of Support Services and Staff Development and Welfare

Description:

The provision of support services to facilitate the operations of the Ministry involves the securing of necessary financial and human resources, the maintenance of an efficient and effective corporate framework, and the responsible use of available resources. It also involves the promotion of consistency, high morale and a high level of professional commitment and performance in the Ministry, and the strengthening of its career service to adapt to new and changing foreign and trade relation priorities on a short, medium and long-term basis.

To ensure a good, healthy and safe working environment within the Ministry, monitoring of developments pertaining to conditions of employment within the Public Service takes place on a regular basis. Opportunities for further training are also monitored, and accordingly taken advantage of for both personal and professional development.

Performance Indicators:

Improved working conditions and environment as a result of maintaining an efficient and effective corporate framework to support the delivery of the Ministry's s will further improve the quality of overall services provided, and increased customer satisfaction. It will improve processes leading to the development of policy advice to the Minister, as well as representation of Governments interests locally and abroad.
